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INFO RHEHAAA/WHITE HOUSE WASHDC  
RHMFIUU/DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHINGTON DC  
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SUBJECT: AFGHANISTAN/COUNTERNARCOTICS: 2009 DRUG ARREST AND SEIZURE  
STATISTICS; JANUARY 1 - FEBRUARY 19

¶1. (U) Summary. This cable is the first in a monthly series recording significant counternarcotics activity in Afghanistan. Highlights include:

- The Afghan police, protected by an Afghan Army battalion, launched successful eradication operations in Helmand Province starting January 31. Over 1500 hectares (3750 acres) of poppy have been eradicated so far, despite frequent hostile contact.
- ISAF supported its first purely counter-narcotics lab-busting operation on February 9, with participation by U.S. and Norwegian military forces.
- The Afghan government arrested 10 low and mid-level narcotics traffickers and seized 7,967 kg of opium and 363 kg of heroin.

End Summary.

#### ERADICATION AND RAIDS

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¶2. (SBU) Helmand Operation: The Afghan National Police's Poppy Eradication Force (PEF), force-protected by an Afghan National Army battalion (CNIK), commenced operations in Nad-e Ali district of Helmand province on January 31. As of February 18, PEF had eradicated over 1500 hectares (final numbers may vary with verification), already surpassing the 1,174 hectares PEF eradicated last season, when it lacked the benefit of CNIK force protection. Organized insurgent resistance has left two CNIK dead, seven CNIK wounded, two ANP wounded, and damaged two INL helicopters.

¶3. (SBU) DEA/NIU Hit Labs: A joint DEA/Afghan National Interdiction Unit (NIU) force executed a search warrant in Achin District, Nangarhar province on February 18, and seized 600 kgs of opium. This is a continuing case involving suspected narcotics trafficker Haji Baghcho.

¶4. (SBU) A DEA/NIU unit also destroyed 10 narcotics labs in Nangarhar on February 9 with security support provided by a Norwegian Special Forces unit that cleared the areas of Afghan civilians. ISAF aircraft, at the request of the Afghan government, bombed a separate heroin lab. This was the first time ISAF military aircraft supported an explicitly CN interdiction operation.

#### DRUG ARREST AND SEIZURE STATISTICS

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¶5. (SBU) The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) in Kabul provided

the following information on counternarcotics (CN) arrests and seizures for January 1 - February 19. The statistics are broken down by law enforcement organization.

¶6. (SBU) Kabul Country Office (DEA): Arrests: 4 (all made by the Special Investigation Unit (SIU)); Opium seized: 603 kg.

¶7. (SBU) Counternarcotics Police of Afghanistan (CNPA): Arrests: 1; Heroin seized: 363 kg; Opium seized: 3,504 kg; Morphine seized: 34 kg; Hashish seized: 214.25 kg; Precursor chemicals (acid): 460 liters

¶8. (SBU) International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) conducted Operation Diesel: Killed in Action: 4 Taliban fighters; Opium seized: 1,700 kg.

¶9. (SBU) Afghan Special Narcotics Force (ASNF): Arrests: 5; Opium seized: 2,160 kg.

¶10. (SBU) Total seizures: Opium: 7,967 kg; Heroin: 363 kg; Morphine: 34 kg; Hashish: 214.25 kg; Precursor Chemicals: 460 liters.

#### SIGNIFICANT CN CASES

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¶11. (SBU) Haji Khostel. In September of 2008 the British Serious Organized Crime Agency (SOCA) began surveilling Haji Khostel and others with whom he was involved in the illegal drug business. SOCA reports Khostel owns a heroin processing facility in Bakwa district of Farah Province. He buys opium and chemical precursors, processes

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this into heroin and sells it in Nimroz, Farah and Herat provinces, and also transports it to Iran and Pakistan.

¶12. (SBU) Said Mohammed, an associate of Khostel, was arrested in Nimroz with about 168 kg of Khostel's heroin. Khostel was charged and detained. In January prosecutors finished work on Khostel's case and transferred the case to the primary court prosecutors for trial. A trial date has yet to be set

¶13. (SBU) Sayeed Silab. Sayeed Silab was, until his arrest on January 19, the CNPA chief in Nimroz Province. SOCA linked Siab to Haji Ghulam, a drug business partner of Haji Khostel (see above). Silab was paid about USD \$300,000 to blame an innocent person for possessing approximately 160 kgs of Khostel's drugs that Said Mohammed, another of Khostel's drug confederation, possessed. Silab was arrested on orders of Ministry of Interior Deputy Minister for Counternarcotics, Gen. Daoud. The Silab case is with the investigative prosecutors at CJTF as of January 24. The Khostel and Silab cases are significant because they involve both a large scale drug dealer and a provincial CNPA chief.

¶15. (SBU) Isamel Safid. Ismael Safid was originally charged at the CJTF in 2005 for possessing about 157 kgs of heroin. Safid was released pending his appeal. Safid failed to appear at his appeal. He was convicted, in absentia, by the CNTF. (NOTE: This is permitted under Afghan law.) The appeal court sentenced Safid to 19 years. Safid remained a fugitive for almost three years. In December 2008, a CJTF investigator, working closely with DOJ mentors and DEA had an informant who helped the Afghan police arrest Safid in Kabul. Safid has appealed his case to the Supreme Court.

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